



The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) is the state agency with primary responsibility for ensuring the state's resilience to disasters. MEMA's staff of professional planners, communications specialists, operations managers and support personnel is committed to an all hazards approach to emergency management. By building and sustaining effective partnerships with federal, state and local government agencies, and with the private sector - individuals, families, non-profits and businesses - MEMA ensures the Commonwealth's ability to rapidly recover from large and small disasters by assessing and mitigating hazards, enhancing preparedness, ensuring effective response, and building the capacity to recover.

### Massachusetts Alerts on Your Smartphone

For severe weather alerts & emergency info from MEMA, download the free “[Massachusetts Alerts](#)” app.



Go to [mass.gov/MEMA/mobileapp](https://mass.gov/MEMA/mobileapp) or search for “Massachusetts Alerts” from your app source.

### Stay Connected with MEMA



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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts



## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS GUIDE

**BE INFORMED  
MAKE A PLAN  
BUILD A KIT  
GET INVOLVED**

This guide is a planning tool to help you and your family prepare for an emergency or disaster. Read and review this guide with your family and keep it in an easy-to-find location.

Massachusetts Emergency  
Management Agency

  
**Ready** Massachusetts  
[www.mass.gov/MEMA/ready](https://www.mass.gov/MEMA/ready)

## Why Should You Prepare for an Emergency?

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) has plans in place to protect public health and safety, but taking responsibility for yourself and family for the first days of an emergency or disaster is the duty of every citizen.

*Planning ahead for an emergency will give you peace of mind and can help keep your family safe.* This pamphlet provides basic information regarding emergency preparedness for the citizens of Massachusetts.

Massachusetts faces risks from a variety of natural and man-made hazards that could result in an emergency or disaster situation. Regardless of the type of emergency, we recommend taking an “all-hazards” approach to preparation, including *being informed about potential hazards, creating a family communications plan, making a household emergency kit and go-bag, and getting involved in your community.* These actions can be the keys to ensuring the safety of you and your family.



For more emergency preparedness information, visit: [www.mass.gov/MEMA](https://www.mass.gov/MEMA)

## Emergency Kit Checklist

- ☐ **Water** - 1 gallon per person per day for 3 days
- ☐ **Food** - 3 day supply of nonperishable foods that do not need cooking
- ☐ **Manual can opener**
- ☐ **Radio** (battery-powered or hand crank), **NOAA Weather Radio** and **extra batteries**
- ☐ **Flashlight** and **extra batteries**
- ☐ **First Aid kit**
- ☐ **Diapers, wipes, baby food, formula**, if needed
- ☐ **Pet food, supplies, tags and crates**, if needed
- ☐ **Prescription medications** and **extra eyeglasses**
- ☐ **Whistle** to signal for help
- ☐ **Moist towelettes, garbage bags, soap, hand sanitizer**, and other **personal hygiene items**
- ☐ **Wrench or pliers** to turn off utilities
- ☐ **Watch or battery operated clock**
- ☐ **Copies of important documents and IDs**
- ☐ **Cell phone & charger** (auto or solar charger may also be needed if power is out)
- ☐ **Cash**
- ☐ **Water purification tablets and household chlorine bleach**
- ☐ **Camp stove or grill** (outdoor use only) or **Sterno and waterproof matches or lighter**
- ☐ **Change of clothes and sturdy shoes**
- ☐ **Sleeping bags or blankets**
- ☐ **Disposable cups, plates, utensils and napkins**
- ☐ **Seasonal items** such as **warm clothes, hat and gloves** for winter and **sunscreen** for summer
- ☐ **Books, games, puzzles and other comfort items**

**Place all items in a portable, watertight bin and store in an easy-to-access location.**

## Be Informed

*Know what emergencies may occur and stay informed during the incident.*

Massachusetts faces a variety of hazards including flooding, winter storms, hurricanes, power outages, tornados, extreme cold and heat, hazardous materials emergencies, terrorism, pandemics, and more.

Learn if you live or work in one of the state's hurricane evacuation zones (A, B, or C) at <http://www.mass.gov/knowyourzone>.

Be aware of severe weather warnings and watches. Information can be obtained from media sources, the National Weather Service, weather radios, and more. Sign up for your community's emergency alerting system to get local information and download our **Massachusetts Alerts** app for your smart-phone. Have multiple ways to get info during an emergency such as TV, radio, internet, phone, etc. in case some methods aren't working.



**June 1, 2011 Tornado in Massachusetts**

**2-1-1** is the Commonwealth's primary telephone call center during times of emergency and is able to provide information on emergency resources.

## Make A Plan

*Plan in advance for what you will do in an emergency.*

### Create a Household Communications

**Plan.** Since your family may not be together when an emergency occurs, it is important to know that everyone is okay. Designate an out-of-town contact for family members to call if separated during an emergency. Keep a list of important contact phone numbers. Consider using the American Red Cross "Safe & Well" tool ([www.SafeandWell.org](http://www.SafeandWell.org)) or use social media to locate family members and friends.

Have a ***predetermined family meeting location*** that the entire family knows.

Ensure that your plan incorporates the needs of specific family members such as ***seniors, children, individuals with medical needs or people with disabilities***.

**Create a Plan to Evacuate.** Plan where you will go, how you will get there (methods and routes) and what you will bring (including your emergency kit). Not all shelters allow pets, so plan in advance what you would do with your pet if you had to evacuate.

**Know the emergency plans of locations where your family might be (work, school, daycare)** to understand what might happen during an emergency.

### Create a Plan for Sheltering-in-Place.

Sometimes sheltering-in-place is a recommended action. If instructed to do so, stay indoors. You also may be instructed to close windows and doors, and turn off heating or air conditioning systems that use outside air.

## Build A Kit

*Consider making two kits, one that can be kept at home for sheltering-in-place and one that is portable for evacuating.*

An emergency kit is intended to provide you with the essential items you would need for at least three days. While some items such as water, food, first aid kit, sanitation items and clothing should be in everyone's kit, it is important to **customize the kit for the needs of you and your family**. Consider adding **medications, children's items, pet food and supplies**, and any other items that your family might need. See the emergency kit checklist in this pamphlet for more ideas.

If you have a well that uses electricity, fill your bathtub with water prior to a storm for use during power outages.

In case of an evacuation, you may want emergency supplies. If your emergency kit is too large to take with you, make a "go-bag," which is a smaller, more mobile version of your emergency kit that you could take with you if you need to leave your house.

At least annually, check your kit for any food, water, batteries or other items that may



## Get Involved

*Once you and your family are prepared for emergencies, get involved in preparing your community.*

There are many opportunities to volunteer in preparedness and public safety programs. Citizen Corps is a volunteer program to make communities safer, stronger, and better prepared. Visit [www.CitizenCorps.gov](http://www.CitizenCorps.gov) for more information and for a list of programs in Massachusetts and their contact information.

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program, under Citizen Corps, provides disaster preparedness and response training to citizens to improve individual and community preparedness. Many communities use CERT teams in support roles during emergencies and disasters.



There are many other volunteer and faith-based organizations that have a role in emergencies. Massachusetts Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters ([www.MassVOAD.org](http://www.MassVOAD.org)) provides information on many of these organizations.